



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: LIZARD

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE LIZARD?

- Although there are several Hebrew words for “lizard,” the most common is *l'ta-ah* (לטאה).
- The lizard is one of eight reptiles mentioned in the Book of Leviticus (11:29-30), which is one of the Five Books of Moses.
- Incidentally, do you know where there's a copy of the Five Books of Moses in this room?

ONE OF THE ANCIENT STORIES OF OUR PEOPLE MENTIONS LARGE WATER LIZARDS (Exodus Rabbah 15:28).

- Has anyone here ever seen a large water lizard? Where did you see it and how big was it?
- The Talmud (Berachot 33a) tells of an *arod*, a crossbreed between a snake and a lizard.
- Has anyone here ever seen an *arod*? Where did you see it and how big was it?

IT'S TIME FOR THE LIZARD QUIZ!

- How many different species of lizard do you think there are in the world—more like 40, 400, or 4000? (4000)
- What useful purposes do lizards serve? (They destroy a number of harmful insects.)
- What do lizards eat? (While most eat insects, some, such as the green iguana, are generally vegetarians. The Gila monster, which lives in desert areas, eats reptile and bird eggs as well as small rodents. Depending on their size, goannas prey on insects, birds and reptiles and their eggs, small mammals, and carrion. The Komodo dragon, is large enough to be a threat to humans.)
- Has anyone here ever eaten a lizard?
- Are lizards kosher? (No, because reptiles are not kosher.)
- One teacher in the Talmud (Bava Batra 142b) saw that the tail of a lizard kept moving after it had been cut off.
 1. Do you think that's possible?
 2. Can anyone teach us what happens when a lizard loses its tail? (It is regenerated.)

THERE'S A STORY ABOUT A LIZARD AND THE POWER OF PRAYER (Sefer Ha-Aggadah).

- Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was reciting the Amidah, the prayer we say standing, when a lizard came and bit him.
- But he didn't stop his praying.
- When Rabbi Hanina's students asked him, "Didn't you feel the sting?" he replied, "May such-and-such come upon me if I felt anything, my heart being concentrated utterly on the prayer."
- How do you think it was possible for Rabbi Hanina not to react to the lizard's bite?
- Are any of the things you pray about so important to you that, if a lizard bit you, it wouldn't distract you from your prayer?



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